



Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740
Tel. (301) 474-5000
Fax (301) 474-5002

MAYOR

Stephen D. Isler

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)

Amanda M. Dewey

Jeffrey Jay Osmond

Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes

July 1, 2019

7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, presiding, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Ethan Sweep, and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. Mayor Stephen Isler had an excused absence. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens.

1. Announcements

Mayor Isler is away on vacation and MPT Papanikolas will be serving as acting Mayor. Town offices will be closed on Thursday, Independence Day, as well as on July 5 and July 12.

2. Discussion Items

All in one fee & fine schedule: TM Broadbent said the Council discussed the comprehensive fee & fine schedule and the accompanying ordinance and resolution at its last worksession. The comprehensive fee and fine schedule will consolidate current fee and fine schedules attached to or embedded in various ordinances into one document. No fee and fine amounts were changed. The only new requirement is the annual review and public hearing of all fees and fines during the budget process.

TM Broadbent noted that the Town just issued its first commercial building permit in the amount of \$1,500 to McDonald's Corporation, which is rebuilding its restaurant on Greenbelt Road. A demolition permit will also be forthcoming. The Town will require a contact who is available around the clock to respond to any problems with this project.

MML convention debrief: MPT Papanikolas said the Council attended the annual Maryland Municipal League Convention last week. Councilmembers are requested to highlight 3 or 4 memorable items. He attended a workshop on procurement practices and found that Berwyn Heights already follows most of the recommended procedures. He enjoyed getting together with other municipal leaders and hearing their different approaches to some of the same problems faced by Berwyn Heights. He also enjoyed Tuesday's keynote address by Charles Marohn, President and Founder of Strong Towns, on the potential benefits to be reaped from the redeveloping old, sometimes blighted neighborhoods as opposed to adding new big box shopping centers on the outskirts of municipalities.

CM Sweep said two workshops stuck out for him: the first was 'Aging in Place' where he learned that it is not necessarily about growing old in one's home but finding a place where one is comfortable in old age and has the resources one needs. Greenbelt has a very good aging in place program and could perhaps be approached for advice and sharing of resources. The other workshop of interest was held by Seat Pleasant about being a smart city and improving city life through data collection, where the data helps in

optimizing traffic flow or preventing crime. But the presentation made no mention about possible downsides of massive data collection and potential for abuse. In his mind, the data collected to power smart cities poses a serious ethical dilemma that should be addressed.

CM Osmond said he attended mostly workshops credited towards the Academy of Excellence in Local Governance certificate. He found the ‘Municipal Budgeting’ and ‘Bridging the Gap’ workshops particularly useful. In the latter, the different roles and perspectives of elected officials and staff in municipal government were explored and important questions raised about how a Council represents its citizens and goes about making decisions.

TM Broadbent said she also attended this workshop and considers it to be very valuable because it discusses the fundamentals of serving as an elected official and common misconceptions. It was led by Katherine Tuck Parrish, her former boss in the City of Rockville and now Executive Search Director for the Novak Consulting Group. She will look into arranging for Ms. Tuck Parrish to give this presentation to the entire Council.

CM Dewey said she attended many core Academy of Excellence courses, which did not leave much time to go to other workshops she was interested in. She moderated a workshop on effective meetings and learned a lot about how other Councils structure meetings to make them more productive. The ‘Municipal Budgeting’ workshop left her feeling good about the budget process this Council went through this spring because it followed many of the recommended steps. She had a number of interesting conversations with local leaders, County Executive’s staff and people involved in the 2020 Census. She learned that approximately 25% of Prince George’s County residents were not counted in the 2010 Census, leading to a loss of an estimated \$18,000 per uncounted person in federal assistance over 10 years. One of the keys to a successful 2020 count will be coordination with the County and she has asked County staff to come to Berwyn Heights for a meeting.

MPT Papanikolas said he found a ‘Future of Recycling’ workshop noteworthy. The current pessimism about the ‘end of recycling’ due to China no longer accepting contaminated recyclables may be misplaced. Recycling is likely to recover as domestic markets for these materials are being developed. TM Broadbent said she believes, in the future, the quality of recycling products will become more important, requiring the elimination of certain contaminants from the recycling stream, such as plastic bags and Styrofoam. MPT Papanikolas said the presenter was less optimistic about achieving zero waste because it would be very expensive, but on a positive note, refuse generated per person in the US has been flat since 1990. TM Broadbent said that many manufacturers have shifted to lighter packaging such as plastic bottles to reduce their shipping cost and ultimately disposal cost. Walmart was a leader on that front, at one point requiring all vendors to reduce their packaging by 10%.

Four Cities agenda: Attendance of Pepco’s Vice President of External Affairs Jerry Pasternak was confirmed. His presentation will focus on a new initiative related to electric vehicle charging stations. CM Osmond suggested Mr. Pasternak also explain how the solar electricity generation market works and what Pepco’s vision for wind energy is. Greenbelt has requested that the Director of the Department of Permitting, Inspections & Enforcement (DPIE) be invited to the meeting and the topic of school overcrowding added to the agenda.

3. Minutes

CM Dewey moved and CM Sweep seconded to approve the June 3 worksession minutes. The motion passed 4 to 0. The June 12 Town meeting minutes were distributed.

4. Department Reports

TM Broadbent said June is flood awareness month and a good time for residents to consider flood insurance. She and Director Hall had a good meeting with County officials regarding stormwater issues and measures to improve stormwater quality and reduce quantity. The County has plans to renovate the second raingarden at the Town Center and is collecting data on properties with stormwater problems. Residents are encouraged to report such problems to the Public Works Department, which will relay them to the County. In the fall, the County may hold a workshop for residents on the stormwater drainage system, for which it is responsible, and stormwater structures that may exist on private properties. Residents may be able to obtain advice on best practices about how to deal with flooding.

TM Broadbent announced upcoming agenda items, to include a fee and fine resolution, a variance for 5708 Berwyn Road, an investment policy, tax credits, truck purchase and roadway contracts, and renewal of the Senior Center MOU. Tippers have been installed on the Public Works trucks and the crew will be able to use them once the new recycling containers arrive.

CM Dewey congratulated the Recreation Council on a great Lake Artemesia concert. The Susan Jones Jazz Quartet attracted over 50 people despite threatening weather. Two more concerts will be held on July 18 and August 29. Tomorrow, the Recreation Council will hold its monthly meeting at 7:30 pm and welcomes anyone to join. The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner will be held on July 17 and those planning to go should RSVP with Yvonne Odoi in the Town office.

CM Osmond said that a new Code Director has been hired and will start work on July 8. She is the former part-time inspector Hollyce Goodwin. TM Broadbent will work with her to hire another full-time and part-time officer to get the Department fully staffed. He enjoyed the creative article about dead trees in the Bulletin, which had been composed by the Public Information Aide Tiffany Minor. Residents have continued to report maintenance problems at foreclosed properties. TM Broadbent said the process of foreclosure and resale of a vacant property must follow a process that can take between 6 months and many years to play out. In the meantime, the Town police and code officers keep a watch on these properties. Often, properties that remain vacant the longest have belonged to owners that did not have a will. CM Dewey suggested to hold a workshop about this problem

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, asked whether the Town picks up an appliance for free if it is the first appliance pickup requested. TM Broadbent said the Town code does not have such a provision and nothing has been changed in the code about appliance pickups.

6. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the Council calendar. The Green Team meeting date was confirmed for the 9th of July.

7. Citizens Discussion

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, reported several dead trees along the Indian Creek trail, one overhanging the T-Ball field. TM Broadbent said those trees are on Park & Planning property and they planning to remove them as well prune dead limbs. Pepco will remove dead trees along Edmonston Road and replant them.

CM Osmond recalled that there used to be a mulch pile at 56th Avenue and Ruatan Street which residents could help themselves to. He suggested M-NCPPC deposit mulch from the dead trees there. TM Broadbent advised against it as those trees might be diseased.

Mr. Ventura further suggested that the Town look into buying the vacant McConnell house on Pontiac Street and turn it into a police station instead of spending money for a study on expanding the Town

office to accommodate a police station. The Pontiac Street property would have enough room to park police vehicles.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk